

Subject: Walkabout Travel Gear Newsletter -- Volume 38

To: brad@walkabouttravel.com



Ho Ho Ho and Happy Holidays.

Handwritten blue ink scribbles and a signature.

Walkabout Travel Gear LLC

Please note that we have reorganized our business, and now our official name is Walkabout Travel Gear LLC.

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Walkabout: Christmas Island (s)

It is easy to determine what was on the minds of European ship captains responsible for attributing already populated islands with western names on a day in late December. There are actually two Christmas Islands; one about three hours south of Hawaii via airplane, and one by Indonesia on the Indian Ocean side.

Christmas Island One

Christmas Island is part of the Republic of Kiribati, previously known as the Gilbert Islands. Independence was gained from the British in 1979. There is not much on Christmas Island to remind a visitor of the Arctic tradition of the holiday; the name's origin is a result of Captain James Cook "discovering" the island on Christmas Eve, 1777. The island is in fact a tropical paradise, and is the largest coral atoll on the planet. The island is largely unspoiled and untouched by modern tourism, although like all undiscovered places will continue to see increasing visitors because of people like us who discover them then promote them. The island is already popular with fishermen, as bonefish fishing is reported to be the best in the world.

Christmas Island Two

The "other" Christmas Island is located in the Indian Ocean south of Indonesia. It is an Australian territory, with English being the primary language. The island is small and sparsely populated, with approximately 2,000 residents. William Mynors, a British East India Company captain, was the first European to encounter the island when he sailed past it on December 25, 1643, and of course named it after Christmas Day. There are nice beaches, most accessible by only four wheel drive vehicles, excellent reefs, and tropical rain forests. The only industry on the island was sporadic phosphate mining until recently, when it was decided to pursue that other industry that all islands with limited resources eventually pursue: Tourism.

Christmas Island still remains off the beaten track, but a new five star casino resort built to attract Singaporeans and others from nearby nations will help change that. Good snorkeling